

***Spartina pectinata* Link.**  
prairie cordgrass  
Poaceae (Grass Family)

**Status:** State Sensitive  
**Rank:** G5S2

**General Description:** Plant with long scaly rhizomes to about 1/4 inch thick. Aerial culms moderately coarse, 28-80 inches tall, smooth. Leaf blades 1/4 to 1/2 inch broad, striate, flat below, the margins scabrid (rough). Spikes 5-20 or more from the central axis, usually short-stalked, diverging to strongly ascending, to 6 inches long. Spikelets 40-80 per spike, sometimes fewer; first glume about as long as the lemma, toothed on the keel and on both edges, narrowed to an aristate tip; second glume strongly spiny-toothed on its keel, narrowed to a scabrid awn-tip from a third to about as long as the body.

**Identification Tips:** In WA, *S. gracilis* occurs in the same range as *S. pectinata*. *S. pectinata* can be distinguished from *S. gracilis* by its wider leaves (greater than 1/4 inch wide) which are often flat and its height at maturity (greater than 3 feet).

**Phenology:** Flowers June-July.

**Range:** British Columbia to Newfoundland, south in the western states to Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Utah, and New Mexico, also in central and eastern states. In WA it occurs in the Columbia Basin and Okanogan Highlands physiographic provinces.

**Habitat:** Wet areas such as swales, meadows, the edges of marshes and ponds, and along streams and riverbanks, in both salt and freshwater. It occurs on moist soil textures from fine clays to silt loams. Somewhat tolerant of alkaline conditions. Associated species at the known occurrences in WA include common reed (*Phragmites communis*), spike-rush (*Eleocharis* sp.), and reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*).

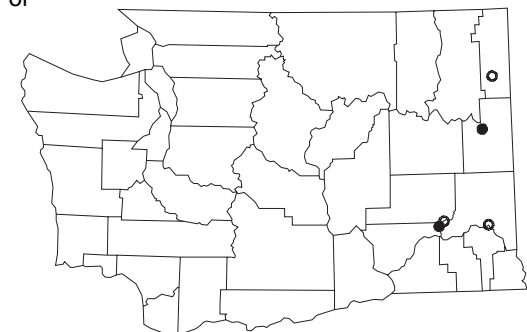
**Ecology:** Vigorous rhizomes allow *S. pectinata* to form pure stands. This feature may also allow it to withstand annual flooding. The species appears to have a fairly broad ecological amplitude, occurring within regions with noticeably different climatic patterns, in a wide range of wetland and riparian types, and in a relatively wide range of soil types.

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prairie cordgrass



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Known distribution of  
*Spartina pectinata*  
in Washington



● Current (1980+)  
○ Historic (older than 1980)

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Katy Beck

Florence Caplow



Florence Caplow

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**State Status Comments:** The species is at the edge of its range in Washington, occurring in Franklin, Pend Oreille and Spokane counties. There are very few known locations, most of which are small in area and number of plants.

**Inventory Needs:** Additional inventory is needed throughout the Washington portion of its range.

**Threats and Management Concerns:** Maintenance of the hydrologic regime and invasion of non-native species are probably the greatest concerns in the WA portion of its range. However, very little is known about the species in WA.

**References:**

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